

# Who Is GOD? Really?

THEOLOGY PROPER: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

## ✕ Can We Define God? ✕

*God cannot be defined completely by man. He is a unique being who is unlike anything else we understand. Therefore, we can never hope to completely define God, yet we can describe Him based on His revelation. The descriptions of God are called His attributes.*

### GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE

There is a sense in which God cannot be fully known. We can only judge the things we see and hear by what we know in creation.

If you were to describe God to a person who had no knowledge of Him, how would you describe Him? Have you ever thought about what

words would be sufficient to describe everything that God is?

If you are struggling to think of the right way to describe Him, don't panic. You are in good company. Everything that God is can't be known by us, but does that mean we can't know Him at all?



### An Infinite God?

*If God is an infinite being, of great power and glory, what can we possibly know about Him?*

Since our minds are finite and imperfect, how can we have knowledge about what is infinite and perfect? How can we know what is fundamentally unknowable?

### God wants you to know Him!

*Although God is perfect and incomprehensible, He has not hidden Himself from mankind. In fact, God wants us to know Him.*

It is true that God is incomprehensible by our human minds, but it is not true that we cannot know anything about God. God has revealed Himself to us! He wants you to know Him. He doesn't just want you to know things about Him, He actually wants to have a

relationship with you. He wants you to get to know Him personally! What an amazing God we serve.



# God the Father

In a later lesson, we will discuss the subject of God as a Trinity. The one and only God of Scripture is Father, Son, and Spirit. Theology Proper is the term for the study of God the Father.

God the Father wants you to know Him. He wants to have a relationship with you.



Jesus said, “*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*” (John 17:3)

God has chosen to reveal Himself to you! He has made Himself known in two ways. He reveals Himself in *General Revelation* (in Nature, History, and the created order). However, He has also revealed Himself more specifically in *Special Revelation* (the Word of God, and in Christ).



Hebrews 1:1-3 says, “God, [Father] who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, [Son] whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the **express image of his person,**

Jesus is the express image of God the Father. When we want to actually see what the Father is like, we look at the character and qualities of Jesus. The Father has spoken to us most completely in the Son.

God is infinite and perfect. To describe His being is impossible by our own minds. However, we can learn how God describes Himself in His Word. God has revealed Himself to us in the many attributes He possesses. The following list of verses shows us what God says about Himself. Look over these and be ready to discuss them in class.



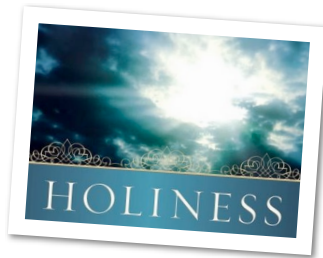


## Attributes Defined

1. **SELF-EXISTENT** - not dependent on anything outside of Himself (Ex. 3:14, Jn 5:26)
2. **TRANSCENDENT** - Completely distinct from the created universe (Isa. 66:1-2, Acts 17:24)
3. **IMMANENT** - God is present with and in the world, though transcendent (Deut 4:7; Jer. 23:24)
4. **IMMUTABLE** - God never changes in His being, attributes, purposes, or promises. (Ps. 102:26-27; Isa 51:6)
5. **ETERNAL** - God transcends all time...has neither beginning nor end. (Ps 90:2-4; 2 Pt. 3:8)
6. **OMNIPRESENT** - God's entire being fills every part of the universe and is present everywhere in His entirety. (Ps. 139:7-10; Acts 17:28)
7. **OMNIPOTENT** - God can do anything consistent with His being, He cannot do that which is contrary to His perfection (lie, change, etc.) (Job 42:2; Jer. 32:17)
8. **OMNISCIENT** - God knows all things past and future. (Job 37:16, Isa. 41:22-23)
9. **INCORPOREAL** - God is immaterial and spirit, He has no body or parts (Jn 4:24; Num. 23:19)
10. **ONE** - There is only one being which is God. (Deut 6:4; Is. 43:10, 44:6)
11. **PERSONAL** - God experiences relationships with other persons or self-conscious beings.
12. **INCOMPREHENSIBLE** - God cannot be fully understood by finite creatures (1 Co. 8:2-3, Ex. 8:10)
13. **MORALLY PERFECT** -
  - a. **GOOD** - God doesn't just hold to the standard of good, He Himself is the standard of good (Gen. 1:31; Deut 8:16)
  - b. **HOLY** - Perfectly separated from all evil. (Ex. 3:5; Isa. 6:3)
  - c. **RIGHTEOUS** - God is the standard of justice and right (Isa. 45:21; Rom. 3:26)
  - d. **TRUE** - Cannot lie (Jn 17:17; Titus 1:2)
  - e. **LOVING** - God Himself is love (Jer. 31:3; Heb. 12:6)
  - f. **WRATHFUL** - God is perfectly just against all sin (Rom. 2:5; Heb. 10:31)

## What it means to me

1. **SELF-EXISTENT** - We cannot do anything for God's benefit
2. **TRANSCENDENT** - God is not part of this world, so He is not "stuck" along with us in our problems with us.
3. **IMMANENT** - God is involved in our world
4. **IMMUTABLE** - God can be depended on to be consistent
5. **ETERNAL** - God knows our future
6. **OMNIPRESENT** - We never have to ask God to be with us
7. **OMNIPOTENT** - God is able to do whatever is needed
8. **OMNISCIENT** - God sees everything
9. **INCORPOREAL** - We must relate to God through our inner spiritual person
10. **ONE** - Our loyalty and fear is to be toward God alone
11. **PERSONAL** - We can have a personal relationship with God
12. **INCOMPREHENSIBLE** - We must not try to force God into something we can picture
13. **GOOD** - No matter how bad things look, God is working them out for good
14. **HOLY** - We must separate ourselves from the practice of evil
15. **RIGHTEOUS** - We can never accuse God of being unfair
16. **TRUE** - Whatever God tells us, we should believe
17. **LOVING** - We cannot out-give God
18. **WRATHFUL** - God will certainly punish sin



# The Holiness of God

There are many attributes of God. He is eternal, faithful, unchangeable, righteous, and just. He is Spirit, love, judge, lawgiver, personal, and self-existent. We could literally spend years discussing each of the attributes of God, but there is one

attribute that over-arches all others. There is one attribute that defines everything else God is. He is love, mercy, justice, and faithful, but above all other things, our God is Holy! In Isa. 6, the seraphim describe God as “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

## WHAT IS HOLY?

Holy means to be separated and set apart. It means to be completely “other,” in a class by one’s self.

THERE IS NONE HOLY AS THE LORD:  
1 SAM. 2:2

THOU ART OF PURER EYES THAN TO BEHOLD EVIL, AND CANST NOT LOOK ON INIQUITY: HAB. 1:13

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE: PR. 1:7



## GOD IS HOLY

God cannot sin, cannot take pleasure in sin, and cannot have fellowship with sin. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of God’s holiness. What we understand about this attribute will influence every aspect of our relationship with God.



## HOLY IS GOD

Holiness is not merely something that God decides to be or do, but it is essential to His very nature—He *is* holy. God would have to cease to be God in order to be unholy.

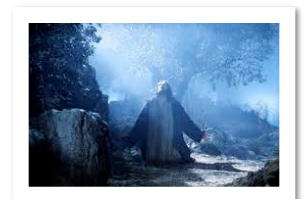


He would have to deny His own nature to do something that is unholy.

Holiness is the preeminent attribute of God and the greatest truth that we can ever learn about Him. Every divine attribute that can be studied is simply an

expression of His holiness in that it *demonstrates* that He is distinct from His creation, absolutely separate, and a completely different being.

The truth of God’s perfection, eternal nature, self-existence, immutability, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are all expressions of His holiness.



## Holiness and The Fear of The Lord

## God's Holiness is Frightening!

Next week, we will talk about how we should respond to God's perfect holiness. Holiness is something that our modern culture doesn't give much thought to. Consider this quote from *The Holiness of God*, by R.C. Sproul:

"Our thinking goes like this: if there is a God at all, He is certainly not holy. If He is perchance holy, He is not just. Even if He is both holy and just, we need not fear because His love and mercy override his holy justice. If we can stomach His holy and just character, we can rest in one thing: He cannot possess wrath."

But Sproul continues: "If we think soberly for five seconds, we must see our error. If God is holy at all, if God has an ounce of justice in His character, indeed if God exists as God, how could He possibly be anything else but angry with us? We violate his holiness; we insult His justice; we make light of His grace. These things can hardly be pleasing to Him." (*The Holiness of God*, pp 223-224).



If our God is a holy God (and He is), and He commands us to be a holy people (and He does), how can he be anything other than angry with our lives.

Of course, we know the rest of the story. We have the gospel, but we cannot allow that to diminish our view of God. He is still Holy. He is still righteous and He is still angry with sin. Next week we will discuss our response to this frightening truth.

*Holy, holy, holy  
Lord God Almighty  
Who was and is and is to come!*